

the boy who cried (wolf) by PheathersWriting

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Summary:

The following events seemed to happen in slow motion, which would probably have looked cool as fuck if Richie hadn't been a gangly uncoordinated teen and if it had been a cool action movie instead of real life: the wolf lunged at Eddie. Richie, in a fit of anger and fear-fueled adrenaline, kicked at the wolf as hard as he could. The wolf twisted its head and sunk its teeth into Richie's leg. Richie's thoughts turned blank except for *oh shit*. Eddie screamed something at the wolf and sprayed it in the eyes with his inhaler. The wolf whimpered, released Richie's leg, and stumbled blindly into the woods. Richie thought another *oh shit* as Eddie scrambled over to him and asked him—something. The world went dark.

AKA, the one where Richie's a werewolf and that's the *least* of his worries (or maybe not, but sue him for being dramatic, will you?)

the boy who cried (wolf)

Author's Note:

this is the first chapter fic i've written in a hot minute so i hope the pacing works well! a lot of the characters tagged don't show up this chapter fyi, but there is some light violence (most of which is in the description) so be forewarned

Derry was a strange town.

Richie knew this as well as he knew his own name, or that Rock Lobster was objectively the best song ever, or that he loved Eddie Kaspbrak. Those were the four truths in his life: his name was Richie, the B-52's were awesome, he was tragically smitten for his best friend, and Derry was fucking *weird*. That maybe said something sad about him fundamentally as a person, but the point was that things happened in Derry that logically should not take place under any circumstances, and everyone just seemed to turn a blind eye. Freak accidents, they called them, or tragedies, or they just went ignored entirely.

That's what they'd called Georgie Denbrough's death. A freak accident. He'd been playing with Bill in the woods when Bill had turned his back, and when he turned around again, Georgie had all but vanished. When they found him again, he was barely recognizable but for the shredded coat he'd been wearing when he disappeared. Mauled to death, the police report said, probably by a pack of wolves. It was just a case of carelessness, leaving him unobserved. Just an accident.

It didn't matter that Georgie wanted to play hide and seek, or that Bill had been trying to coax him into ending the game when it happened. It didn't matter that there weren't any wolves in Maine. It was just an accident.

At least, that's what the majority of Derry believed. Bill Denbrough, apparently, was excluded from that majority, which Richie was growing more and more tired of by the minute. He thought

something was weird, sure, but if he had to hear Bill stutter through another argument that it couldn't *possibly* have been wolves, it *must* be something else one more time, he thought he might lose his mind. He was trying not to snap at Bill, he really was, because it had been exactly two months since Georgie's death and Bill was jumpy and strung up like a live wire, but *god*. Richie just wanted to talk about literally any other thing on the planet, but instead they were repeating the same conversation they'd had countless times in the past two months. He bit back a tired sigh.

"I'm just s-saying, wolves d-don't live in Maine. Why would they b-be in D-D-Derry? It d-doesn't make sense. It had to b-be something else that got G-G-G-G—" Bill trailed off, frustration clear on his face. Stan gave him a pointed look.

"The same thing happened last month to Betty Ripsom, remember?" Stan said. "They're guessing that a pack migrated. This stuff just happens sometimes."

Bill shook his head.

"It's not r-right. Wouldn't M-Mike have to take extra care of his sheep if there were wuh-wolves?"

"What else would it have been?" Eddie asked, ignoring the glare Stan shot him. Bill frowned.

"I don't kn-know," he admitted.

Something about the conversation made Richie want to squirm uncomfortably. He didn't want to think about what could be lurking in the shadows of Derry.

"Well, Big Bill, I don't think ya oughtta tell tall tales 'less ya got the facts to back 'em up!" Richie cried, throwing on a cowboy Voice that he knew would distract everyone enough to change the topic. As expected, he was met with a chorus of groans and he sighed privately with relief as Stan started talking about something else that Richie didn't bother to pay attention to.

"Hey, are we still on for tonight?" Eddie asked Richie, lowering his

voice just a touch. Richie felt his heart swell at the thought.

"Of course, Spaghetti! Who would I be to leave you all alone on a Friday night?" Richie threw his arm around Eddie's shoulders, and the answering *don't call me that* and *it's Monday, anyways* was softened by the way he allowed for his arm to stay there.

Eddie shuffled uncomfortably. Richie watched as he sucked in a deep breath and scuffed the toe of his shoe in the dirt. He was so obviously nervous that it made Richie's own palms sweat just watching him.

"Not that I don't want to be here, Eddie my love, but is there a reason we're traipsing around in the woods at night?" Richie asked. He hoped his nerves weren't as obvious in his voice as he thought they were, but if the look Eddie shot him was anything to go by, he didn't hide it well.

"Shut up, asshole," Eddie replied, but his glare was softened by the nervous way he held himself. "I just— I have something I want to tell you." But then Eddie fell quiet again, and Richie felt like if he didn't say anything he was either going to scream or tell some terrible joke that could get him slapped, and probably for good reason.

"Look, whatever it is you wanna say, you don't have to, Eds," Richie said, hoping to interrupt Eddie's train of thought. If the way Eddie stiffened was anything to go by, it seemed to have worked.

"Don't call me that," Eddie snapped, and then the tension drained from his shoulders. He sagged but maintained eye contact, and Richie almost believed Eddie could see directly into his soul. Richie opened his mouth to make another dumb comment, but before he could, Eddie said all in one breath, "I, uh, IreallylikeyouandIthinkweshoulddateifyouwant."

Richie gaped.

"You, uh— what?"

Eddie finally dropped eye contact, choosing instead to fidget with the zipper of his fanny pack and frown at the ground.

"I mean, I kind of thought you felt the same way but please don't be mad if you don't or if this is weird or anything but I just thought that the way we hang out is really nice and if you wanted to kiss and stuff that would be really cool but if I'm wrong I'm sorry please don't be mad," Eddie blurted.

"I'm not mad!" Richie cringed at how loud his response was, but it made Eddie look up at him again, so fuck it. "I just didn't think you were—"

The snap of a branch broke them both out of the awkward spell between them. They glanced around nervously for the source of the sound.

"What was that?" Eddie's voice wavered as he whispered. Richie was about to shrug and try to play it off when he spotted a pair of—shit, of *glowing yellow eyes*. Directly behind Eddie. And suddenly he could make out the looming figure of what had to be a wolf and he felt like his heart would beat straight out of his chest.

"Get away from there!" Richie hissed, stepping forward slowly. Eddie, brave stupid Eddie, did exactly the *opposite* and instead turned around and looked directly at the wolf. He let out a strangled shriek and scrambled backwards toward Richie.

The following events seemed to happen in slow motion, which would probably have looked cool as fuck if Richie hadn't been a gangly uncoordinated teen and if it had been a cool action movie instead of real life: the wolf lunged at Eddie. Richie, in a fit of anger and fear-fueled adrenaline, kicked at the wolf as hard as he could. The wolf twisted its head and sunk its teeth into Richie's leg. Richie's thoughts turned blank except for *oh shit*. Eddie screamed something at the wolf and sprayed it in the eyes with his inhaler. The wolf whimpered, released Richie's leg, and stumbled blindly into the woods. Richie thought another *oh shit* as Eddie scrambled over to him and asked him—something. The world went dark.

When Richie woke up, the first thing he noticed was a throbbing pain in his leg, followed by the frantic muttering of one Eddie Kaspbrak. The world blinked back into focus, and suddenly he saw Eddie squatting in the dirt, pressing band-aid after band-aid to the deep sutures on his leg, which bled defiantly around the too-small bandages. Richie pushed himself up onto his elbows and Eddie's head snapped up.

"Oh thank God, Rich, I don't—you passed out and I don't have any bandages big enough to wrap your leg and I wanted to wipe off the blood but it would probably just get dirt in the wounds and the last thing you need is an infection, especially since you don't know what was up with that wolf and if it had any diseases or anything, and you know how dangerous wolves are after everything with Betty Ripsom and—and Georgie, and I was so *scared*, Richie, because what was I gonna do if you... I mean, I'm just glad you woke up but you really should go to the doctor because that's definitely not something that should just be left open or who knows what could happen!"

For as much as Richie's head was reeling, he tried to keep up with Eddie's rambling. It made his heart skip a beat in the annoying way it always did when Eddie showed he actually cared for him when he got hurt or did something dangerous.

"Thanks, Eddie," Richie said, cutting him off. Eddie stopped abruptly, staring at him with a wide-eyed panic Richie wasn't sure he'd ever seen before. "We should probably head home, though. I think we've got bigger bandages at my house that might actually work."

"Right. Yeah. Do, uh, do you think you can ride your bike? Or should I... I mean, I've never let anyone stand on the spokes before but I can try because you probably shouldn't do too much with your leg and all but if you want to ride your bike that's okay too, but you really should be careful."

Richie felt himself flush at the idea. He wanted to say no, to insist that he was fine and could ride his bike perfectly well, thank you very much, but instead what came out was a warbled “sure.” Eddie’s face relaxed minutely, and all Richie could think was *fuck, I am so whipped*.

Standing up made it clear that Richie was definitely less fine than he wanted to say he was. He wobbled to his feet and gripped Eddie’s shoulder hard as his leg trembled, blood running down it even with the band-aids. Eddie wrapped an arm around his waist and helped him stumble through the woods, walking slowly down the path. Distantly, Richie was thrilled at the closeness, at the lengths Eddie was going to help him, but presently all he could focus on was the pain that had him limping every step. It felt like it took hours to get out of the woods, and they barely spoke the whole time, tersely focused on the task at hand. He wasn’t sure they had ever spent this much time quiet before.

Ha, suck it, Stan, he thought, giggling to himself, *looks like we can go more than two minutes without annoying each other*.

Eventually, they made it to their bikes and let each other go. Eddie hopped onto his bike and then turned to face Richie, a nervous look plastered across his features that reminded Richie of earlier, before he was literally *attacked by a wolf*, what the *fuck* was up with that.

“You can get on, if you still wanna,” he said nervously. Richie just smiled and clamored aboard behind him, wincing at the strain and wrapping his arms tentatively around Eddie’s middle to hold on. As Eddie pushed off, all Richie could focus on was the shift of Eddie’s muscles against his chest. Slowly they biked away, leaving the woods, Richie’s bike, and a little bit of the pain behind.

The ride to Richie’s house took longer than usual, but Richie couldn’t find it in him to complain, not when he was sitting on the back of Eddie’s bike and listening to the quiet huffs of breath as Eddie strained to get them across town. It was nice enough that he could pretend to ignore the pain and fear he felt lingering inside of him. As they rode down the street, cold December wind biting at his skin (and ain’t irony a bitch for that?), Richie almost convinced himself that everything was normal.

As soon as the Tozier porch light came into view, Eddie seemed to gain an extra burst of energy. He peddled them furiously down the street and actually put up his stand once he rolled to a stop. Privately, Richie didn't want to let go of Eddie, and would have wished that the moment would go on forever had he not been in excruciating pain. Like *damn*, who knew that legs could hurt that much? He certainly didn't. He was never taking his legs for granted again.

Richie fumbled off of the bike, trying not to topple onto the ground. Eddie hopped unceremoniously off as soon as Richie was on his feet, shoving his shoulder under Richie's armpit and hauling him toward the door. He shoved it open with more force than Richie thought was really necessary, but he wasn't going to complain. Let Eddie be forceful! It was something Richie had been actively pushing him toward since day one.

"That you, Rich?" his mom's voice called from the kitchen. Richie and Eddie exchanged a glance.

"Sure is!" Richie responded with as much forced casualness as he could, at the same time as Eddie cried, "Can we get some help?"

"Eddie, is that you?" Footsteps echoed through the hallway, and then Maggie Tozier stood in front of them. "Is everything— Richie! What the hell happened?"

"We were attacked by a wolf, Mrs. Tozier, and I think you should take him to the hospital or the doctor at least because I don't know what kind of diseases a wolf can carry but we had to walk through the woods to get out and it could be all kinds of infected with who knows what and I don't want you to have to amputate—" Eddie cut his own ramble off with a look of horror. "Oh my God, are you gonna have to amputate your leg? *Shitshitshit* I didn't even think about that, should I have put a tourniquet on it?"

Richie was a little bit amazed that Eddie didn't even seem to care that he just swore in front of his mom. Starry-eyed, he shot his mom a grin, but she didn't seem to find it nearly as funny as Richie did. Shame, it was always fun when Eddie got so focused that he forgot to be polite as all hell all the time.

"Eddie, sweetheart, I don't think we'll need to amputate anything. I'll take him to the ER, alright? You can just head home. I'm sure your mother is worried sick about you being out this late on a school night."

Eddie paled, but seemed to calm down as Maggie spoke to him. *Good ol' Mags*, Richie thought. Always knew how to get a situation under control. Finally, Eddie stepped away from him. Richie stumbled at the loss, trying not to let his knee buckle as he suddenly had to support his full weight. Eddie and his mom shared matching looks of concern as he winced in pain, which made Richie feel small in a way that he hated. Eddie hesitated by the door for a moment, staring wide-eyed at Richie like he wasn't sure what to do next.

"Go on, Doctor K!" Richie said, throwing on a Voice he knew would get a reaction. It seemed to work: Eddie's shoulders relaxed as he rolled his eyes. "You fixed me up pretty good, but now it's time for me to see the pros. You'll have to tell your mom that I won't be able to visit her tonight. Hopefully she won't miss me too much."

Eddie said, "shut *up*, Richie," at the same time as his mom sighed, "Richard!" and it was music to Richie's ears.

The car ride to the emergency room was shorter than the bike ride to his house, but without the distraction of Eddie's body in front of his, Richie felt the pain much more strongly. He tried not to wince when bumps in the road jostled him, but in the lonely comfort of the passenger seat, it was easy to remember the terror and pain coursing through his body.

The actual emergency room trip didn't take long, or if it did, Richie wasn't aware of it. The gave him pain medication through an IV practically as soon as he got through the door, and afterwards was all a sort of blur. Distantly, he was aware of the nurse pulling off the many band-aids Eddie had applied and slathering something on it, but his mind just felt empty. Fuzzy, as if someone had taken his mind's glasses off and he could no longer think clearly. The world around him was fuzzy, too, and if he really thought about it he could remember that his mom took his glasses off when he laid down. He wasn't really thinking about it, though. He was just drifting, through time and space, in and out of consciousness, through images of

yellow eyes and hulking shadows and sharp sharp teeth that glinted in the moonlight. Was there moonlight? Yes, he remembered, there was—Eddie looked ethereal bathed in it, the brightest the moon had been all month. Damn, what *was* it that they gave him? He was pretty sure he'd never even *thought* the word ethereal before, much less used it to describe Eddie.

(It was true, though. He looked otherworldly, beautiful. Not so different from the *cute*, *cute*, *cute!* he usually was, but at the same time, not similar at all.)

How had he gotten onto the topic of Eddie? He couldn't even remember. All of his thoughts seemed to circle back to him in the end.

Eventually, he ended up back in his mom's car. His head still felt foggy, but the bandages wrapped around his leg were a sort of stifling comfort against the dull ache that was slowly coming back. His mom was tensely quiet in a way she rarely was, and Richie felt oddly nervous that she wasn't laughing or talking at all.

"M sorry I got hurt. I didn't really think there were *actually* wolves in Derry now. We were just hanging out," Richie mumbled, and his mom sighed.

"What were you doing in the woods in the first place? You know that they can be dangerous."

"Yeah, but we needed somewhere private. Eddie needed a place to talk. He asked me..." Suddenly, Richie remembered. He jolted in his seat. "We need to go to his house."

"What? Why?" Maggie briefly glanced at him, eyebrows wrinkling in concern. "Is everything alright?"

"I didn't get to answer him! Please, Mom, it's super important."

"It can wait until tomorrow, Richie, assuming it's not life or death. You'll see him at school."

"But—! Mom. *Mom*. Mags. Maggie. Mrs. Tozier. Listen. It's so important. It is absolutely essential that he knows the answer as soon

as possible."

"It's the middle of the night. I'm sure Sonia wouldn't appreciate being woken up. You can wait, Richie. It's not the end of the world."

It sure *felt* like the end of the world, though. Knowing that Eddie had actually asked him out (him! Richie! It was hard to believe it!) but that he hadn't been able to answer because of that stupid wolf was going to drive him crazy. But eventually, he relented. She had a point. He would see Eddie the next day, and it wasn't like he was going to *forget* before then.

Author's Note:

>:)

please leave comments/kudos if you enjoyed! i already have a solid chunk of chapter 2 written, but with finals going on right now im not sure when exactly it'll be up. but im very excited for this fic even if its objectively a terrible idea for me to write it because i am absolutely terrified of dogs :')) good decisions only!